

## **Planned Management Action**

**Downsizing, rightsizing, whatever you want to call it, is killing me. I have vacancies in my organization, but I haven't been able to fill them because I can't bring someone new into the organization without having to RIF someone who I already have on board. As a result, I have been forced to assume of the additional duties myself, but others I have given to people on my staff. In some cases these are probably higher graded duties. I want to fill the jobs through competition, but I can't run the risk of having an outside placement made from the Priority Placement Program (PPP). Given my financial situation, I just can't take any risks, so I have left my jobs vacant and distributed the work.**

### **Some History**

**Prior to 1979, a promotion resulting from adding duties and responsibilities to a position by a "planned management action" had to be done through a competitive process. In 1979, the Office of Personnel Management abolished this requirement. As a result, management is now free to assign any work to ANY position that falls within that position's normal scope of duties. This includes the assignment of higher level work that could eventually result in promotion.**

**In order to minimize the adverse impact on employees involved in actions**

## Two Meanings

such as reductions-in-force (RIF), realignments, base closures, consolidations, contracting out, rotation from overseas assignments, transfers of function (TOF), and position classification decisions, the DoD Priority Placement Program was established. The PPP helps save people from unemployment and loss of grade and is a benefit of employment with DoD.

Over the years, two types of personnel actions have been referred to as “planned management actions.”

- The first involves the assignment of higher level responsibilities and duties over a period of time that eventually results in an accretion of duties promotion.

- The second refers to the promotion of an employee through competition when an encumbered position has been upgraded and the addition of another employee would result in a reduction-in-force.

The central issue in both of these types of actions is that management *intentionally* added higher level duties and responsibilities to a position. In the first type there was no competition and, in the second, the competition would be limited to the employees of a specific organization. Since **Accretion of Duties** promotions has been addressed in detail

**in another section, the discussion below addresses the second type of action.**

### **PLANNED MANAGEMENT ACTION**

(From PPP Operations Manual July 1998)

**The promotion of an employee through competitive procedures when an encumbered position has been upgraded as a result of planned management action and the addition of another person would result in someone being adversely affected by RIF (applies only if the new position includes most of the duties and responsibilities of the former position.**

#### **Examples**

**Example 1: A field office has work for four (and only four) GS-11 civil engineers, and all four of the positions are filled. The organization gets a requirement from Headquarters to do some civil engineering work that turns out to be GS-12 level, *but without an additional billet*. Management could open the new GS-12 position to competition within the organization, but that would open up the possibility of a PPP placement that could put them in the position of having to RIF an excess GS-11.**

**Example 2: An activity has five encumbered Budget Analyst, GS-560-12 positions. The staffing plan shows five Budget Analysts, GS-560-12 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Due to increased workload and organizational changes, management decides that it needs a GS-**

Discussion
Documentation

**13 team leader. The activity has not been authorized additional FTE and can clearly document that it has no vacant GS-560-12's. The intent is to advertise internally and abolish the position vacated by the selectee (no increase in FTEs). A review of all vacancies within the activity reveals that in the event a PPP candidate is placed at the activity, someone would be adversely affected by RIF.**

**In both of the above cases, workload drove the decision to upgrade the position, not the desire to promote a particular person. The activity is not trying to avoid competition for the promotion, it is simply trying to fill one position without causing someone to be adversely affected by RIF.**

**In both cases the position should be advertised within the activity, and once one of the employees is promoted, abolish the position that the person previously held.**

**The request for personnel action is exempt from the provisions of the PPP.**

**HRSCs are responsible for ensuring that all PPP transactions comply with the letter, spirit and intent of DoD policies and procedures. Additionally, the HRSC must maintain sufficient documentation to provide a clear audit trail of program actions showing that all**

**Some Cases to  
Consider**

**organization chart showing clearly a before and after snapshot; (2) A narrative statement outlining what is being done (the Budget Analyst example above could serve as an example); and (3) A list of current recruitment actions within the competitive area. Remember that a competitive area is the area in which an employee would *compete for retention* under RIF procedures.**

**The HRO and HRSC would work together to determine whether a mock-RIF is necessary or if some form of alternative documentation would suffice that using the planned management action exception to the PPP was justified. HRSC will retain all documents in the event the exception is supportable and the activity proceeds with the recruitment action.**

***Case 1: A medium size naval shore activity has not yet received its final resource allocation for FY 0X. The CO has directed that a freeze be placed on the filling of all external vacancies until the final allocation is received. In the Quality Assurance Office there is a need for a team leader and prior to the freeze, the position description had just been classified at a higher grade. The manager of the QA office wants to proceed with the recruitment claiming that as a planned management action he is exempt from PPP considerations because of the freeze.***

**Comment:** Since the freeze is temporary and appears to be very short term, this is probably not an example of a planned management action that would stand up to a PPP audit.

***Case 2: The Planning Directorate has four Management Assistant GS-344-06 positions. A Management Analyst GS-343-09 retires and his position is abolished. There are however a number of the duties from his old position which have been redescribed and the new position is classified as a GS-344-07. The Planning Directorate still has a target of two additional positions to abolish by the end of the fiscal year. No external hiring will be approved to fill the Management Assistant GS-07 position. In reviewing vacancies for the entire activity the HR staff finds that there is a recruitment action in the Business Office for a Management Assistant GS-06. May the Planning Department use the planned management action exception to the PPP?***

**Comment:** NO, because if there were a placement from the PPP, no employee would be adversely affected by RIF. The excess Management Assistant GS-06 would be placed in the vacancy in the Business Office.

***Case 3: Pearlene's organization has just completed two major RIFs within the past eighteen months. As a result of both voluntary and involuntary separations, she has a skills imbalance within her***

**Questions and  
Answers**

*organization. She is attempting to reduce her personal span of control and has decided to add a couple of senior specialists, possibly even a team leader, who will help her provide technical oversight of the staff. She would like to make all selections from her own staff and abolish the positions vacated by the selectees. Can she proceed under the planned management action exception to the PPP?*

**Comment:** Possibly, but there is not enough information here to know whether the conditions for planned management action have been satisfied. Generally, however, major work force rebalancing DOES NOT meet the requirements for the planned management action exception.

**Question 1:** *Who decides whether the Planned Management Action exception to the PPP applies?*

**Answer:** The HRSC staff that has been delegated PPP management responsibility for the HROs that the HRSC supports.

**Question 2:** *I have provided all the information that I have that my activity cannot afford to take any additional people. The HRSC still isn't satisfied. Can the CO provide a written statement certifying that there are no vacancies and that any additional placement would*

**Questions and  
Answers (con't)**

*result in a RIF? In short, when is the documentation enough?*

**Answer:** The HRSC leadership has the authority and responsibility to insure that the provisions of the PPP are being maintained. Your CO's statement alone is NOT sufficient to obtain approval of the exception sought. It is difficult to say when the documentation provided is enough, but that is a judgment made by the HRSC leadership. For this reason it is important for those intending to use the planned management action exception to the PPP to work very closely with their HR advisors at the HRO and HRSC leadership.

**Question 3:** *I have an employee to whom I have been assigning additional duties and responsibilities. I have been forced to do this because I have not been allowed to fill four of my most recent vacancies. I have asked for an advisory classification on the work she is doing and it came out a grade higher. Does the planned management action exception to PPP apply?*

**Answer:** This may be an **Accretion of Duties** promotion or a competitive action that falls under the normal rules for merit promotion.

**Reference**

**DoD Priority Placement Operations  
Manual, dated July 1998**